
HQ U.S. Army Installation Management Command, Europe Region



Public Affairs Office
Unit 29353, Box 200 APO AE 09014
69033 Heidelberg
DSN 370-7549/7235
Tel.: 06221-57-7549/7235

Press Release

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Kaiserslautern honors ‘Heroes at Home’

By Christine June
U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany – Almost 100 people, labeled as Heroes at Home, were honored here April 19 during a U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern’s volunteer recognition ceremony.

The volunteers received awards in front of a crowd of more than 300 members of the Kaiserslautern military community.

“It’s a way for the garrison to say thank you, not only to the award recipients but also to the almost 1,300 KMC members who are registered with our volunteer program,” said Angela Bellamy, the garrison’s Army Volunteer Corps coordinator.

Bellamy also noted that the 1,300 total does not include the more than 1,200 people who volunteer for the garrison’s annual Special Olympics Spring Games.

As for the honorees, the first-ever Angel Award went to Arlo and Teri Frederick. They are emergency placement parents for the garrison’s Army Community Service, providing 24-hour home care for children who cannot be cared for by their families. The ACS’s emergency care placement program is similar to the stateside foster care system.

The Fredericks were unable to attend the ceremony, but speaking on their behalf, Bellamy said, “The selection committee wanted to do something special for them because – 24-hours a day – they take children into their homes.”

Volunteer of Distinction honors went to Laurie West, the Family Readiness Group leader for Headquarters, Headquarters Company of the 37th Transportation Command. During the unit’s yearlong deployment to Kuwait and Iraq, she hosted meetings, dinners and contacted families in Germany and in the states when needed.

Her husband, Maj. Ted West, the unit's HHC commander, noted many types of assistance that military organizations provide to Soldiers and their families are supported in part, or in some cases solely, by volunteers.

"We would not have many such services if we didn't have people volunteering," he said.

In total, West worked 1,150 hours teaching Sunday school to first-graders and Army Family Team Building classes to FRG leaders and spouses new to military life, and volunteering at installation schools, Kaiserslautern-Landstuhl Spouses Association and child-care development centers.

The youngest recipient of the night was 13-year-old Alexa Harris, who was crowned as the garrison's Teen Volunteer of Distinction. She volunteered 125 hours as the president of the Torch Club, which is a youth leadership club for middle-school students sponsored by the garrison's teen center.

Her parents, Tech. Sergeants Cedric and Camille Shephard, of Ramstein Air Base, agreed that the garrison's teen center is a good place for their daughter.

"They (the teen center staff) really take the kids and put them in a venue where they can excel," said Alexa's mother.

And 11 members of the Torch Club itself were presented with The Presidential Volunteer Services Award from the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. They teens earned the award by volunteering 300 hours from baking cookies to assisting the garrison with its Toy Outreach Program.

The Torch Club also has attained Bronze Level status in the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, which is given only to clubs that are active in their communities, said Belynda Smith, the garrison's Child and Youth Services coordinator.

Winning the Group of the Year Award for the second year in a row was the garrison's Better Opportunities for Better Servicemembers. The 50-member program volunteered 2,600 hours throughout the community from gathering trash to dressing up like animals for a children's function.

"They (BOSS) were picked again this year because they do so much for everyone," Bellamy said.

Additionally, various agencies and organizations throughout KMC nominated 22 people as Volunteers of Excellence, and each were recognized at the ceremony. These individuals volunteered 14,635 hours at organizations such as the American Red Cross, United Service Organizations, chapels and schools.

Overall, Bellamy pointed out, volunteers registered with the garrison have donated close to 100,000 hours this year – a savings of more than one million dollars.

"Our volunteers take care of families during deployments, wounded troops and children throughout the Kaiserslautern military community," she said.

CUTLINE: BOSS Volunteer

A Soldier from the U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern, Germany, Better Opportunities for Single Servicemembers program participates in the Kaiserslautern American Elementary School Mentorship Program. (Photo by Christine June)

CUTLINE: TEEN Volunteer

The U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern's Teen Volunteer of Distinction, Alexa Harris, helps Bryce Hogans with the bean-bag toss game during the Month of the Military Child Carnival at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany. (Photo by Christine June)

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